



Roger Casement Branch

of Óglaigh Náisiúnta na hÉireann Teoranta (ONET)



The Link

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Branch Chairman: Michael Delaney

Hon. Secretary: Noel Murphy 087 6342941

Hon. Treasurer: Patrick Lynch

PRO: Peter Mc Glynn Phone: 086 401 1154

Link Editor: Paddy O'Meara



www.oneaircorpsbranch.com

E: onerogercasementbranch@gmail.com

Honorary Branch President:
James Nolan



RCB members took part in 1916 commemoration Parade.

L/R: P.McGlynn, M.Lally, F.Donnely, G.McCann, M.Delaney, PJ McCaffrey.

Also on Parade: N.Murphy, PJ Brennan, D.Barry.

EASTER SUNDAY 1916 COMMEMORATION PARADE

Members of the Roger Casement Branch took part in the National 1916 Commemoration Parade which was held in Dublin on Easter Sunday 2016. The Branch was allocated nine places in the parade as part of the 108 member ONE contingent.

Peter McGlynn Branch PRO provided the following details:

"The day began with assembly at 1000 hrs on the square in McKee Barracks followed by a bout of square bashing to check that all was up to speed and ready for inspection.

We then boarded the buses to take us to the assembly point in Fleet St.

We received our marching orders at 1230 hrs and lined up on Westmoreland St.

ONE was the lead group for the parade with members from every branch participating. We were followed by IUNVA which also had 108 members on parade.

The parade proceeded up O'Connell St to great applause and cheering from the general public.

We completed our element of the Parade near the old Ambassador Cinema finishing outside Jury's Hotel. The buses then transported us back to Mc Kee Barracks." The Branch members were proud to have represented the Branch by participating in such a historical event.

Editors Note

This edition features an article provided by Matt Kennedy (1957 Apps) on the Bristol Britannia and mentions a number of former Air Corps personnel who served as Flight Engineers particularly during the transition from the piston engine aircraft through to the introduction of the early large Jet Transport Aircraft. Flight Engineers were an integral part of Aviation History during this era.

Many thanks to Capt Sean McCarthy for contributing the regular AIR Corps News section. Congratulations to the GOC and members of the Air Corps who performed with great distinction on the ground and in the Air during the many events which took place during the 1916 ceremonies around the country.

Members of the Branch also participated in 1916 commemoration parades in Saggart and Newcastle, Co. Dublin in addition to the Easter Sunday ceremonies in Dublin and in attending the Anzac Day Ceremonies.

All members were sad to hear of the passing of BG Jerry O'Connor. Those of us who had the honour of working with him held him in the highest regard and appreciated his dedication and professionalism frequently in difficult situations. Ni Bheidh a leithead.....

Brigadier-General Jerry O'Connor

Members were saddened to hear of the passing of our colleague BG Jerry O'Connor on April 13, 2016 aged 95. As a former GOC, Jerry was always very supportive of the Roger Casement Branch and was interested in the activities



of the Branch and in the status of his former Air Corps colleagues. He regularly attended the Branch annual Mass and in fact attended the 2015 Mass which was held in Casement Aerodrome in October. He also liked to receive a copy of the Link Newsletter.

Many of our members worked with him in Gormanston and Baldonnel during his time in Service and remember him with great respect as a fine pilot and sportsman.

We extend our deepest sympathy to his family on the tragic loss of a real Air Corps legend.

Ar dheis lamh De go raibh a Anam dilis.



NEWS IN PICTURES

1965 Apprentice Class 50th Anniversary



L/R. Denis Barry, Patsy Cooke, John Walsh, John Whitney



Anzac Day Service

Branch members attended the Anzac Day Service at 6 am in Grangegorman Cemetery on April 25, 2016. L/R Frank Donnelly, Tony Roe, Noel Murphy.



Former Air Corps members attending Paul Glynn's Funeral on Easter Sunday 2016

L/R Larry Kenny, Mick Rushe, Paddy O'Meara, Martin O'Sullivan.



Guard of Honour at the Graveside in Ennis for Paul Glynn



The RCB Banner is carried by Chairman Mick Delaney in St Josephs Church Ennis.



A group from the RCB visited the Ulster Aviation Museum in Lisburn on May 18th.



Fairey Gannett in the Aviation Museum in Lisburn

The Whispering Giant

Matt Kennedy

Last Summer, after attending a wedding in Cambridge, UK, I decided to visit the aviation museum in nearby Duxford.

As I entered the main exhibition hall, to my surprise and delight, parked in the hangar was an aircraft on display that I was very familiar with, a Bristol Britannia - a different colour scheme but the reg G-AOVT, Victor Tango, was exactly as I remembered - the Whispering Giant on which I spent many happy hours as a Flight Engineer, now painted in the yellow colour scheme of Monarch Airlines.

When I joined British Eagle in the late sixties, there was already a number of Ex. Air Corps personnel operating on the Britannia to name a few; Brian Rowley, Tony Daly, Pete Maguire, Harry Murphy and Alo Kelly. Apart from British Eagle there was also a number of ex -Air Corps personnel who went on to be Flight Engineers with other airlines including Jim McCabe (East African Airways), Jim Galway (B.O.A.C.), Ned Cleary and Phil Carolan (Dan Air), John Carter (British Caledonian), Gerry McFadden (Aer Turas) and P.J. McGoldrick (Trans Meridian).

Later, I took in a tour of the aircraft, the guide was an ex- R.A.F. Flight Engineer, named Bob.

After the tour, Bob joined me over a coffee and soon we were chatting about the "Brit" and the different operators including B.O.A.C., British Eagle, Cubana, Monarch, Transglobe, Britannia, EL-AL. When I mentioned EL-AL, Bob went on to say that it was a sister ship of Victor Tango that Mossad used in the abduction of Adolf Eichmann from Argentina in 1960.

Once I returned home I read about the Eichmann kidnapping in a book written by Alan Levy - Nazi Hunter:

In 1959, MOSSAD discovered that Adolf Eichmann worked as a foreman at a Mercedes Benz factory on the outskirts of Buenos Aires. On May 11th 1960, the bus from the Mercedes factory dropped Eichmann at his bus stop. MOSSAD kidnapped him and held him at a safe house for eight days prior to smuggling him onto the Britannia. At this time, a long scheduled visit to Argentina by Abba Eban (Israel Foreign Minister) provided a respectable cover for operation Eichmann. Argentina was observing its 150th anniversary of Independence and Eban was leading a Israeli delegation to the celebrations. At the same time EL-AL, the Israeli government airline, was inaugurating a service between Tel Aviv and Buenos Aires.



Matt Kennedy

The Airplane used was the Whispering Giant Britannia Prop -Jet. It landed in Buenos Aires at 5.52 pm on May 20th 1960 with an unusually large staff of nineteen, including a well rested crew for the return flight. After the passengers disembarked, the plane was towed into the hangar for servicing.

Three hours later, crew members who were not working the return flight but were riding it home, came drifting back from downtown Buenos Aires in varying conditions. One uniformed steward was in such bad shape that he had to be driven to the aircraft steps and helped up the stairs by two of his colleagues. "I'm glad there are no passengers." An Argentine airport guard remarked. "I'd hate to be served by him." The drunken steward was in fact Eichman. He was smuggled out of Argentina on board the Britannia. After a tense delay awaiting flight plan approval, the aircraft took off, landed in Dakar, Senegal, for a fuel stop, then on to Tel Aviv, just before midnight on May 20th 1960. At 7.35am on May 22nd 1960, Ad Eichmann set foot on Israel soil to face justice.

Eichmann was accused of war crimes against humanity, he was found guilty and hanged in Tel Aviv just before midnight on May 31st 1962.

The Britannia became known as the Whispering Giant because of its quiet exterior noise and smooth flying, although the passenger interior remained less tranquil.



Air Corps News

1: Helicopter Training Team Deployed to Assist the Armed Forces of Malta

The Irish Air Corps was contacted by the AFM (Armed Forces of Malta) with the aim of providing flight training on their recently acquired AW139 helicopter fleet. The Irish Air Corps have been operating the AW139 since 2006 and have accrued significant operational experience since the aircraft entered state service. This experience was of particular interest to the AFM in order to achieve full operational status on their AW139 fleet. The AFM is responsible for a Search & Rescue Region (SRR) over a very large area of the Mediterranean Sea that extends south towards North Africa.

The AFM were particularly interested in developing their capabilities in the areas of helicopter Search & Rescue winching operations, cargo-slinging and special forces assault techniques both on land and in a maritime context. 3 Ops Wing are well placed to provide consultation and assistance in the training of flight crew to develop these roles, and a mobile training team was deployed to the AFM's Air Wing in Malta. The training team consisted of two Qualified Helicopter Instructors, two Aircrew Instructors and two Helicopter Handling Instructors.

The mobile training team completed a programme of seven days training with the AFM's AW139 aircraft. The training consisted of detailed briefings on flight procedures and techniques, flying training and also the training of ground personnel. The team was based out of Malta International Airport in LUQA. This was the first occasion that a team from the Irish Air Corps deployed into an international operational training mission for a foreign military.



Crews provide training for The Armed Forces of Malta

2: Ceremony to Commemorate the Capture of Roger Casement on Banna Strand

'I assert from this dock that I am being tried here, not because it is just, but because it is unjust. Place me before a jury of my own countrymen, be it Protestant or Catholic, Unionist or Nationalist, Sinn Féineach or Orangemen, and I shall accept the verdict, and bow to the statute and all its penalties. But I shall accept no meaner finding against me, than that of those, whose loyalty I have endangered by my example, and to whom alone I made appeal. If they adjudge me guilty, then guilty I am. It is not I who am afraid of their verdict -- it is the Crown. If this is not so, why fear the test? I fear it not. I demand it as my right.' Extract from the address by Roger Casement following his conviction at the Old Bailey in London on 29 June 1916.

ON the 21st of April, in the stunning surrounds of Ballykissane Pier and Banna Strand, thousands of people gathered to honour Roger Casement, James Monahan, Con Keating and Dónal Sheehan who all paid the ultimate sacrifice for their roles in the events of 1916.

The occasion was truly fitting and included a re-enactment of Roger Casement's speech from the Dock by Declan McCarthy and a reading of the Proclamation by Lt Dermot Considine. Music was provided by the Army No.1 Band, Sgt Noel McCarthy on Bag Pipes, Siamsa Tíre and the duo of Mike Hanrahan and Breanndáin Ó Beaglaoich. The President of Ireland, Michael D.Higgins, arrived with a motorcycle escort drawn from 2 Cavalry Squadron before inspecting a Captain's Guard of Honour drawn from 12th Infantry Battalion. On the conclusion of his keynote address President Higgins placed a wreath on behalf of the people of Ireland. The event was brought to a stunning close when,

just as Amhrán na bhFiann was coming to an end, the Air Corps fly past came soaring from behind the sand dunes, over the beach and out to sea toward the waiting LÉ Niamh.



Aircraft fly-past at the Banna Strand Ceremony

3: Airman Michael J. Whelan is now a published poet.

Michael, as you know, is our resident historian and is the driving force behind the impressive collection of aircraft and artefacts within the Air Corps' museum. He has educated countless civilians, airmen and Generals regarding the history of Ireland and the Air Corps. His knowledge is surpassed only by his enthusiasm and talent for telling the story.

His poetry tells the story of his experiences of serving as a U.N. Peacekeeper in Lebanon and Kosovo. The collection is available from Doire Press, at www.doirepress.com and from Books Upstairs and The Winding Stair bookshops.



Michael Whelan

4: B767 Sets Sail for Enniscrone

The Crew from 101 Sqdn came across a very interesting sight during their maritime patrol on the 6th of May. This Boeing 767 airframe, taken from Shannon Airport, was being delivered to Enniscrone to provide a unique camping experience as part the Quirky Glamping venture.



Boeing 767 cruising to Enniscrone